

There was a unique custom in 770 that took place throughout the years. During the farbrengen on *Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim* (when the weekly *parsha* discusses the *mitzvah* of lending money to a fellow Jew in need) the Rebbe would give a bottle of *mashke* for the *melave malka* benefitting the Crown Heights *gemach Shomrei Shabbos* (taking place that evening).

When Reb Yochanan Gordon of the *gemach* would approach to receive the *mashke*, he would put on a *striemel* and deliver a short *vort*, reminding the crowd of the importance of giving *tzedakka* and appealing that they attend the *melave malka* and donate to the *gemach*. After his passing in 5729, his son-in-law, Reb Shimon Goldman filled this role.

Here is an interesting story he told in 5747 and the Rebbe's comments on it that followed.

The *tzaddik* Reb Nochum of Chernobyl would periodically visit a certain town, where he would always stay at the home of a particular *chossid*.

One year, as Reb Nochum prepared for his annual trip he sent a message to his *chossid*, saying that if he will not come up with two thousand ruble (an enormous sum of money), the *tzaddik* will not stay with him this time. Additionally, he will be forbidden from coming to visit his Rebbe altogether throughout the entire trip, both for *tefillos*, and for the *tish* that he will conduct.

One can only imagine how broken-hearted the *chossid* was. All of his possessions did not even total anywhere near **one** thousand ruble. Suddenly coming up with double that amount was simply unthinkable!

Reb Nochum arrived in the town and he indeed stayed elsewhere, while throughout the entire visit the devastated *chossid* was unable to see his beloved Rebbe.

A short while after Reb Nochum left the town, a passing nobleman stopped in with his entire entourage. And a wonder of wonders occurred! Some of the soldiers chanced upon the *chossid's* home, and the accidently left behind an immense treasure. Miraculously, when they returned to the town to search for the missing treasure, they skipped over the home of this *chossid*.

When he opened the chest, the first sum the *chossid* managed to lay his hands upon was exactly two-thousand ruble! Excitedly,

the *chossid* carried the money over to his Rebbe, Reb Nochum. It was then that the Rebbe explained to him what the meaning of the entire affair was.

"In heaven," Reb Nochum began, "it was decided that you should be blessed with riches, but only after you would pray for it. In order to make you to ask for riches, I needed to cause you the temporary pain."



The Rebbe listened to Reb Shimon as he told his tale through the end, and then he commented:

There is a question on this story (a "*klutz kashé*"), which makes me presume that the version as it was now told is inaccurate.

If the only reason why the pain was needed was in order to

arouse a desire for riches in the heart of the *chossid*, why then did the pain need to endure for such a long time?

Being a true *chossid* of Reb Nochum, even missing **just one** *davening* with his Rebbe should have been enough to bring about the deepest pain and cause him to cry bitterly, with heartfelt "*chassidische* tears!"

Even if he was not the biggest *chossid* but merely a simple Jew, even if he was a "*grubber yung*," nevertheless, seeing that everyone else in the town is allowed into the *tzaddik's* residence and enjoying his holy presence, should have been enough to break his heart.

Therefore it would make sense to say that although the

general content of the story is accurate, some of the details were confused.

The nobleman's appearance in the town took place much earlier in the story, immediately after Reb Nochum reached the town and did not stay in the *chossid's* home (or possibly after one *davening* in which he was not allowed to participate, but no more). This would have already caused him enough pain to storm the heavens in prayer for riches.

As is often the case, we can assume that when the story was passed down from hand to hand, it was altered a bit by some of the transmitters in order to make the story sound better and more exciting. They obviously did not realize that in the process, they not only failed to enhance the story, but they actually only made it harder to believe! **D**

